

Harford County Continuum of Care Governance Charter

1. Overview

The Harford County Continuum of Care (CoC) is responsible for developing long-range plans to meet the needs of homeless persons in Harford County, and for coordination and implementation of activities designed to meet those identified needs. In sum, the CoC's responsibilities include the following:

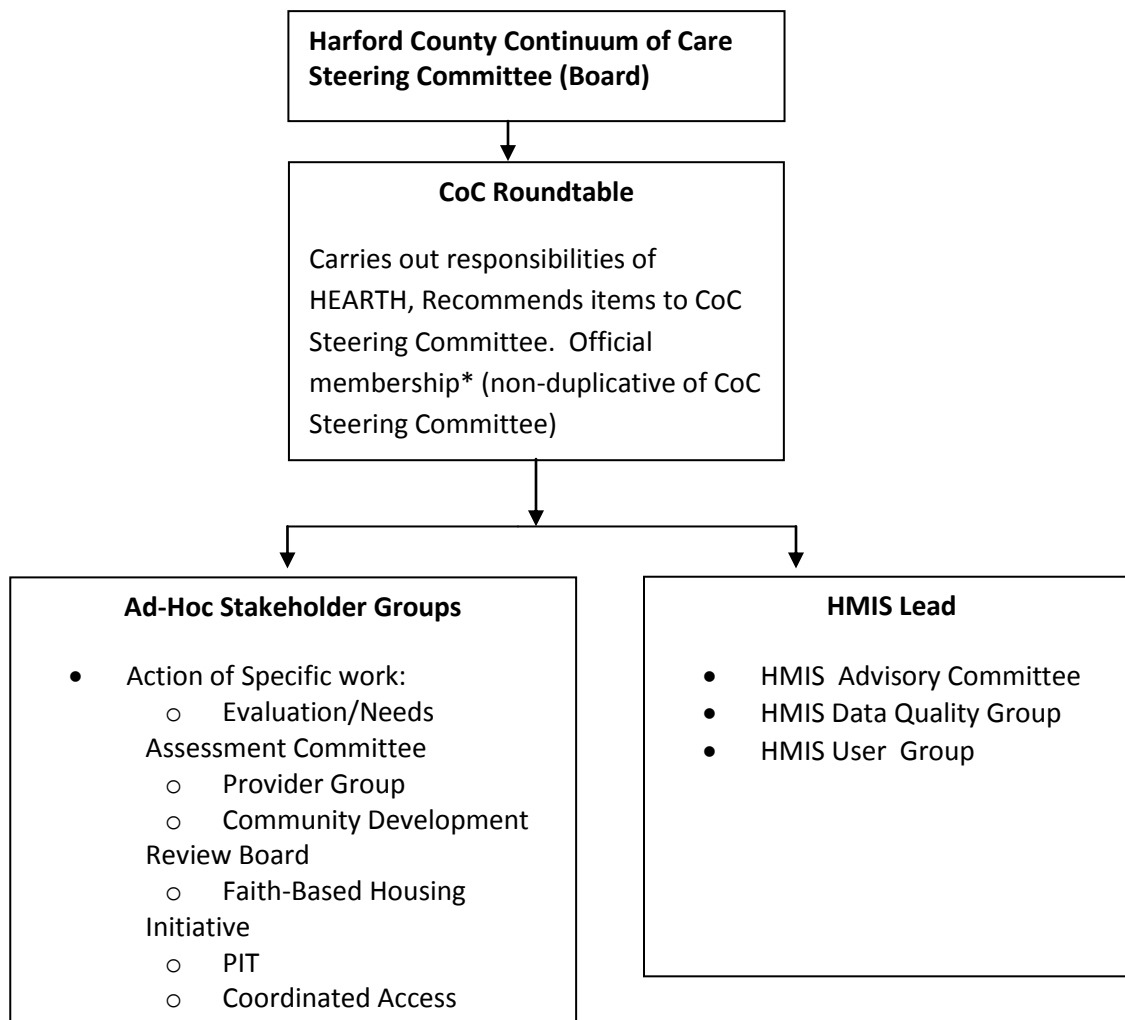
- Promotion of a continuum-wide commitment to the goal of ending homelessness
- Development of adequate funding for efforts for preventing homelessness, rapidly re-housing homeless persons and stabilizing their housing
- Promotion of full access to, and effective use of, mainstream programs
- Optimization of self-sufficiency among individuals and families experiencing homelessness
- Oversight and management of HUD McKinney-Vento resources to maximize effectiveness and performance outcomes of projects serving the needs of homeless persons
- Monitor performance and outcomes of ESG and CoC programs and report to HUD including establishing performance targets and taking action on poor performers.

The CoC works toward ending homelessness through a coordinated community-based process of identifying needs, conducting a system-wide evaluation of existing resources and program activities and building a system of housing and services that addresses those needs. The established CoC governing body is the Harford County Continuum of Care Steering Committee. A specific responsibility of the CoC is to effectively coordinate and manage federal resources provided through the HUD McKinney-Vento Program, and fulfill the responsibilities assigned to continuums of care under Title 24, Part 578 of the Code of Federal Regulations. Additionally the CoC will satisfy all other legal requirements necessary to secure maximum funding under relevant state and federal programs.

The Continuum operates under this Governance Charter and through Policies, Procedures, and Standards, which have been developed in consultation with the Steering Committee, the HMIS Lead, and the Harford County Department of Community Services.

2. Organizational Relationships

As the below organizational chart describes, the Continuum consists of a Steering Committee (assisted by staff), Standing Committees and Ad Hoc Committees. The Steering Committee coordinates and is linked with Continuum of Care planning groups. In addition, the Steering Committee is linked to the Unified Funding Agency or Collaborative Applicant Lead Agency (as appropriate) for purposes of applying, receiving and managing McKinney-Vento Grant funds. The specific responsibilities of these groups are further described in Section 3 below.



The composition of the CoC is tailored to meet the unique characteristics of Harford County, Maryland. The Full Continuum Membership consists of representatives from relevant Organizations and agencies within Harford County, Maryland, as well as other individuals interested in the well-being of homeless and formerly homeless people who are included in the broad e-mail communication list maintained by staff of the Continuum. New organizations and individuals serving the homeless within the Continuum jurisdiction are invited to join at any time during the year and can be included on the e-mail list of Full Members by contacting wlbhola@harfordcountymd.gov. An open invitation will be included on the Community Services

Website and the announcement for the Full Membership Meeting will include a special invitation for new members annually.

Membership shall be open to social service agencies, other entities, and individuals under but not limited to the following categories:

1. Members representing the homeless community in Harford County
2. Members representing the low and moderate-income community
3. Members representing local financial institutions
4. Members representing non-profit housing, neighborhood or community services organizations.
5. Members representing participating local municipalities in Harford County
6. Members with an active interest in affordable housing and homeless issues
7. Members representing law enforcement, the business community, the medical community, and the citizenry at large
8. Members representing the school districts in Harford County
9. Members representing faith-based organizations
10. Members representing data collection and maintenance
11. Members of victim service providers
12. Members of public housing agencies
13. Members of mental health agencies
14. Members of organizations that serve veterans
15. Members representing Social Service Agencies
16. Members representing Hospitals
17. Members representing Universities
18. Homeless or formerly homeless individuals

The CoC partners with local planning organizations, state level organizations, and governmental agencies in carrying out its responsibilities. Planning and coordination take place at both the CoC-wide level and the local level. Representatives of local non-profit organizations and advocacy groups, statewide agencies and local government are included among members of the CoC Steering Committee to ensure effective participation by all community stakeholders in developing and implementing a range of housing and services.

3. Geographic and Organizational Representation

The CoC geographic area of the Continuum includes Harford County.

The Steering Committee Composition

The CoC is a representative organization with a diverse and comprehensive membership. It includes community stakeholders, agency staff representing the major homeless populations and representatives of state agencies involved with homeless programs.

The Harford CoC provides leadership in homeless planning for the geographical area of the continuum and may be composed of the following designated positions to the Steering Committee to provide for broad representation (note: one person may represent the interests of more than one designated position):

1. Non-profit organizations
2. Faith-based organizations
3. A homeless or formerly homeless person

4. Representatives from organizations serving each of the major subpopulations of the homeless – Families with Children, Unaccompanied Youth, Chronic Homeless Persons, Veterans, Seriously Mentally Ill, HIV/AIDS, Persons with Substance Abuse Disorders and Victims of Domestic Violence, Dating Violence, Sexual Assault and Stalking.
5. Local municipalities in the County
6. Local law enforcement representatives
7. Representative from the Harford County Department of Social Services
8. Representative from the Mental Health Agencies
9. Representative from the Health Department
10. Other representatives may be added by a majority of the Steering Committee in order to meet the responsibilities of the Continuum

Selection Process

To assure that the diversity of membership in the Steering Committee as outlined above is obtained, the Steering Committee will nominate individuals that represent the appropriate committee seat as defined by the member categories listed above. The general body of the CoC will be informed of vacancies on the committee and members will be asked to submit interest/nomination forms if they wish to volunteer themselves or nominate another to serve on the steering committee. Steering committee members will then review the interest forms and make a recommendation to the general body, which will then proceed to elect an individual to fill the vacancy. The general membership shall make appointments at their first meeting following a resignation or other interim vacancy.

Every two years, local Continuums will be asked to either confirm the current representatives or select a new representative to the Steering Committee.

This process must be reviewed and updated at least every 5 years. In addition, the Steering Committee must meet all of the requirements for Governing Boards found in the federal regulations at 24 CFR Part 578.5 (b) and assure that it is current with amendments to those regulations. This will include meeting the Conflict of Interest provisions.

Steering Committee Voting

All members of the Steering Committee may participate in discussion on issues before the Committee. Each shall have one vote. Decisions will be made on a majority vote basis.

Officers

There will be a Chair (or Co-Chairs of the Steering Committee at the discretion of the Steering Committee). Other positions may be established at the discretion of the Committee. Positions will be filled by a majority vote of the Committee. Terms will be for a two-year period with the potential for succession by vote at the end of two years.

Members of the Board and its Officers, as well as others acting on behalf of the Board must comply with the conflict of interest requirements at 24 CFR part 578.95(b), i.e. No Continuum of Care board member may participate, in or influence discussions or resulting decisions concerning the award of a grant or other financial benefits to the organization that the member represents.

Other Committees Selection Processes

Standing Committees – Currently, standing committees include Evaluation/Needs Assessment Committee, Provider Group, Community Development Review Board, HMIS Advisory Committee, Point-in Time, and Faith-Based Housing Initiative. Members of standing committees may volunteer or be solicited/appointed by the Steering Committee. They need not be members of the Steering Committee. The Chair (or Co-Chairs) of Committees will be chosen by the membership of the Committees. The individual Committees will determine terms.

Ad Hoc Committees – From time to time, the Steering Committee or its Chair(s) will appoint ad hoc committees to carry out specific tasks. The Chair (or Co-Chairs) of Ad Hoc Committees will be chosen by the membership of the Committees. The individual Committees will determine terms. These committees serve at the discretion of the Steering Committee.

4. Continuum Responsibilities

The operation and management of Continuum responsibilities are formalized below for the purpose of accomplishing several goals:

- Provide the framework for a comprehensive, well-coordinated, and clear planning process, including the local county planning processes
- Measure the CoC's effectiveness in reducing homelessness at both a system and project level
- Periodically modify its strategic approach to ending homelessness
- Strengthen coordination between CoC-funded activities and other HUD-funded activities directed at ending homelessness, such as activities funded through the Emergency Solutions Grant (ESG) program

The following specific responsibilities of the Continuum are designed to accomplish those goals:

1. Conduct effective planning processes to develop and update a Plan to End Homelessness

The CoC is responsible for coordinating and implementing a comprehensive system to address the needs of the homeless population and subpopulations and persons experiencing a housing crisis within its geographic area. The Continuum develops long-range strategies and action steps to implement the Plan, periodically evaluating and updating the plan to assure its effectiveness.

The Continuum coordinates the following components of the system:

- Outreach, engagement and assessment
- Shelter, housing, and supportive services
- Homelessness prevention strategies

Multiple funding sources from Federal, State and local programs are needed to carry out the Continuum's homelessness activities. Coordination of these funding streams and related services leads to a stronger community response to homelessness.

2. Coordinate with other entities and organizations in improving the effectiveness of homeless assistance in the Continuum

Harford County has an integrated system for developing Continuum of Care and Consolidated Plans. The lead entity for the Continuum of Care planning structure is the

Harford County Department of Community Services, part of Harford County Government. County government provides staff support to the Harford Roundtable and to the Community Development Review Board. The Harford Roundtable develops, executes, and plans the Homeless Continuum of Care System. CoC staff conducts bi-monthly Roundtable Meetings.

3. Assure an effective performance management system through HMIS to ensure progress in meeting established project and continuum outcomes

The Continuum is accountable to HUD, the community and the Maryland Statewide Housing Data Warehouse for the HMIS and maintains a strong relationship with the Department of Housing and Community Development, non-profit participants, Harford County Health Department, and Harford County Department of Social Services for collecting accurate and timely data. CoC staff participates on the Advisory Committee of the Maryland Statewide-Housing Data Warehouse to establish performance targets appropriate for population and program type in consultation with recipients and subrecipients. The HMIS Lead also reviews periodic reports on performance of Continuum of Care wide goals. The Continuum is responsible for the following HMIS functions:

- Designating Harford County CoC as the single HMIS for Harford County.
- Designating Harford County Department of Community Services CoC staff to serve as the HMIS lead to manage the HMIS.
- Ensuring that the HMIS is administered in compliance with requirements prescribed by HUD.
- Reviewing, revising, and approving an HMIS privacy plan, security plan, and data quality plan.
- Ensuring the consistent participation of recipients, and subrecipients in the HMIS.

4. Maintain an effective HUD McKinney-Vento project monitoring and technical assistance effort to assist grantees with weak performance or management

Monitor recipient and subrecipient performance, evaluate project outcomes, and provide technical assistance to weak or poor performers. Manage McKinney-Vento resources to assure maximum impact of funds on improving outcomes; and reallocate funds as necessary.

5. Establish a Coordinated Assessment System

In consultation with the recipients of Emergency Solutions Grants program funds, establish and operate a coordinated assessment system that provides an initial, comprehensive assessment of the housing and services needs of individuals and families within the Continuum. The Continuum will develop and maintain a policy that guides consistent operation of the coordinated assessment system, with respect to how the system will triage and address the particular safety needs of individuals and families who are experiencing homelessness. In addition, the policy will state how the system will address the needs of individuals and families that are fleeing or attempting to flee domestic violence, dating violence, sexual assault, or stalking. The coordinated assessment system will 1) cover the geographic area served by the Continuum; 2) be easily accessed by individuals and families seeking housing or services; be well-publicized; and 3) include a comprehensive and standardized assessment tool.

6. Encourage coordination among federal homeless programs through improved coordination with recipients and sub-recipients of the Emergency Solutions Grants

Coordinate with ESG recipients, and the Community Development Review Board on the allocation of resources within the Continuum and the development of a coordinated intake

and assessment system. The Continuum will consult with State and local government ESG recipients within its geographic area with respect to the plan for allocating ESG funds and reporting on and evaluating the performance of ESG recipients and subrecipients.

7. Maximize resources by annually preparing competitive applications for the HUD McKinney-Vento Programs

Harford County Department of Community Services CoC staff is the Collaborative Applicant (CA) for Harford County CoC. The CA will, develop a strong McKinney-Vento application and aggressively seek resources annually. Assure that McKinney-Vento funds are adequately managed, conduct activities, which achieve Continuum outcomes and goals, and maximize the use of the funds. A CoC must establish priorities for funding projects in its geographic area. The selection process must be transparent and inclusive and based on the standards indicated in 24 CFR part 578.19(b).

The CA will follow a collaborative process for developing applications and approving the submission of applications in response to a NOFA published by HUD in concert with the funding priorities and plan adopted by the Continuum. In the process, the Continuum will ensure that eligible applicants submit all project applications.

The responsibilities of the CA include:

- Apply for funding through the NOFA annually, for all projects within the geographic area and enter into a grant agreement with HUD for all of the projects
- Enter into legally binding grant agreements with subrecipients (project sponsors), and receive and distribute funds to subrecipients for all projects within the geographic area
- Require subrecipients to establish fiscal control and accounting procedures necessary to assure proper disbursement of and accounting for federal funds in accordance with the requirements of 24 CFR parts 84 and 85 and corresponding OMB circulars
- Obtain approval of any proposed grant agreement amendments by the CoC before submitting a request for an amendment to HUD

8. Apply for the designation of Unified Funding Agency of the Continuum of Care

The Continuum may designate the CA to seek Unified Funding Agency (UFA) designation. A CA may request UFA designation through the annual CoC Program Registration process. HUD will inform the collaborative applicant and the UFA if it meets the required criteria. If approved by HUD, the UFA must carry out all of the responsibilities of the collaborative applicant as well as additional requirements that are set forth in the CoC Program interim rule. In order to be considered for UFA designation, collaborative applicants are required to:

- Represent the Continuum as stated in the requirements in 24 CFR part 578.7 of the CoC Program interim rule
- Have financial management systems that meet the standards 24 CFR part 85.20 (for States)
- Demonstrate the ability to monitor subrecipients
- Demonstrate and/or address any additional criteria that HUD may require by NOFA

If, after reviewing information submitted by the collaborative applicant addressing the above requirements, HUD designates the collaborative applicant as a UFA, the collaborative applicant will have the following additional responsibilities:

- Apply for funding through the NOFA annually, for all projects within the geographic area and enter into a grant agreement with HUD for all of the projects
- Enter into legally binding grant agreements with subrecipients (project sponsors), and receive and distribute funds to subrecipients for all projects within the geographic area
- Require subrecipients to establish fiscal control and accounting procedures necessary to assure proper disbursement of and accounting for federal funds in accordance with the requirements of 24 CFR parts 84 and 85 and corresponding OMB circulars
- Obtain approval of any proposed grant agreement amendments by the CoC before submitting a request for an amendment to HUD

9. Conduct an annual assessment of needs and resources through Point In Time Counts and Resources Inventory

Annually assess the needs of homeless persons in the Continuum through a well-coordinated point in time count, an on-going assessment of trends through analysis of HMIS data, and an assessment homeless needs and housing/services resources available within the Continuum. Conduct a gaps analysis and determine unmet needs of the Continuum.

The point-in-time count of homeless persons within the Continuum will enumerate 1) the number of homeless persons who are living in places not designed for or ordinarily used as regular sleeping accommodations for humans (unsheltered homeless persons); 2) identify the number of homeless persons living in emergency shelters and transitional housing projects (sheltered homeless persons); and 3) identify other requirements established by HUD by Notices.

10. Develop written policies, procedures and standards

Establish and consistently follow written standards for providing assistance through Continuum resources, in consultation with the recipients of Emergency Solutions Grants program funds.

The Continuum operates in accordance with the following policies, procedures, and standards.

- Steering Committee Operating Procedures. Specific requirements are found at 24 CFR part 578.7(a)(3).
- Code of Conduct, Conflict of Interest. The Board must comply with the conflict of interest requirements at 24 CFR part 578.95(b).
- HMIS Policy and Procedure Operating Procedures
- Coordinated Intake and Assessment System

Coordinated Intake and Assessment System for Harford County CoC.

Due to the geography of Harford County and transportation problems, Harford County will use multiple locations for the intake process and a referral process. This will include a first level screening – initial screening and service matching, - the receiving program conducts further screening, assessment, verification and makes final admission decision. Additional data collection may be required by the receiving agency. The Department of Social Services will continue to be a resource; however, the Emergency Solutions Grant prohibits them from receiving ESG funds to provide motel vouchers. Alliance has applied for the ESG funding for motel vouchers for individuals/families. Alliance will provide the case

management for mentally ill individuals; DSS will continue to provide case management for families.

In support of “any door” services strategy, clients may call or go to any one of multiple participating service providers and homeless providers. Intake workers at each location use standardized intake, assessment, and referral procedures and tools; the receiving provider is responsible for entering the data into HMIS.

In addition, the Continuum’s coordinated assessment system must incorporate these standards when evaluating and referring potential program participants. The written standards include the following:

- a. Policies and procedures for evaluating individuals’ and families’ eligibility for assistance under the CoC Program
- b. Policies and procedures for determining and prioritizing which eligible individuals and families will receive transitional housing assistance
- c. Policies and procedures for determining and prioritizing which eligible individuals and families will receive permanent supportive housing assistance
- d. If the Continuum is designated by HUD as a High Performing Community (HPC), policies will be developed that meet the standards for high-performing communities, as described in the Emergency Solutions Grants program rule at 24 CFR part 576.400(e)(vi) through(e)(ix)

11. Publish Applications and Plans

Make available on the Community Services Website and/or through electronic distribution, major plans of the Continuum, annual HUD application submitted by the Continuum and written Roundtable agenda and meeting minutes.

12. Maintain an active Continuum organizational structure and conduct regular meetings in an open process

Full Membership Meetings – The Continuum will hold bi-monthly meetings of the Full Membership. These meetings will be open to the public and will be announced at least two weeks in advance by an e-mail to the Full Membership, and placed on the Community Services Website. Agendas of the meeting will be published with the meeting announcement. Among the purposes of the meetings will be to provide updates on progress in meeting plan strategies and evaluating performance, training, disseminating information, obtaining comments on issues and directions and/or planning.

Steering Committee Meetings – The Steering Committee will convene a minimum of two meetings a year, to review the CoC Program Grant Project Priority List at the time of the application for funding and for needs analysis in the spring after the Point-in time count and Annual Housing Inventory HIC reports are released. Minutes will be taken and major decisions will be communicated to the full Membership of the CoC as appropriate.

Other Committee Meetings - Standing Committee and Ad Hoc Committees will meet periodically to fulfill their tasks. The Chair(s) will set the meeting times and venue. Reports of Committee work will be made to the Steering Committee as needed. The Continuum has established the following Standing Committees.

- Evaluation/Needs Assessment Committee

- Provider Group
- Community Development Review Board
- Point-in-Time Count
- HMIS Advisory Committee

13. Invite new members to participate

New organizations and individuals serving the homeless in the Continuum jurisdictions are invited to join at any time during the year and be included on the e-mail list of Full Members by contacting Wanda Bhola at wlbhola@harfordcountymd.gov. An open invitation to participate in Continuum activities will be included on the Community Services Website.

14. Select Board members in a fair and open process

Select members of the Steering Committee and other standing ad hoc committees following the written process outline above on pages 3 and 4.

15. Develop and follow a Governance Charter for the Continuum

In consultation with the collaborative applicant and the Homeless Management Information System (HMIS) lead, develop, follow, and update annually (1) a governance charter that includes all procedures and policies needed to comply with 24 CFR part 578.5(b), and with HMIS requirements as prescribed by HUD, (2) a code of conduct and recusal process for the board, its chair(s), and any person acting on behalf of the board.

16. Provide information needed for Consolidated Plan(s) within the Continuum's geographic area

Coordinate with Harford County's Department of Community Development to supply information needed for Consolidated Plan,

17. Adoption and Updating the Governance Charter

The initial Draft Charter will be published and distributed to the full Continuum membership for comments to be received within a 21-day period. Comments will be reviewed by the staff and considered by the current Steering Committee. The current Steering Committee will then adopt by majority vote a final Governance Charter and will forward to the full Continuum membership a copy of the final with its response to the comments submitted on the draft. The Charter will be published on the Community Services Website. The adoption of the initial policies, procedures, and standards will follow this same process (if they have not been already adopted in the same process as the Charter is adopted).

On an annual basis, the Charter will be reviewed and updated by the Continuum using the following process: By March 31st the staff of the Continuum will provide a "State of the Continuum" Report, which includes an evaluation of the performance and operative functions of the Continuum and (with the consultation of the Steering Committee Chair(s) or a Committee assigned by the Chair) recommendations for updating the Charter (including its policies, procedures and standards) to reflect changing needs and actions to further adopted goals. The procedures noted above in the previous paragraph will be followed in the adoption of amendments to the Charter. By a vote of the majority of the Steering Committee,

proposed modifications will be published and sent to the full Continuum membership for comment.